

How to select sequences of Whole-Body-Movement

Selecting the appropriate Warming-Up and Winding-Down movements for each Posture

Preface and Acknowledgements

In different parts of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, YOU & ME Yoga has been taught, by the teachers I have trained, to thousands of students with special educational needs. These students range from profound and multiply disabled to those with mild learning difficulties. They include students with Down's Syndrome, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, epilepsy; visual, aural, speech impairment and psychiatric and/or behavioural problems.

From research and experience I found that no one posture (asana) has a specific therapeutic effect and that it is necessary to tone up all the bodily functions by using a series of movements for each of the main body areas. Thus I devised the YOU & ME Whole-Body-Movement system comprising twenty carefully selected Postures which do not require much balance or physical effort, so as to be within the capacity of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Whole-Body-Movement is comprised of a sequence of seven coloured Postures which are designed to exercise, strengthen and bring awareness into the different parts of the body. In 1986, with the help from Tom Williams, Snr. Educational Psychologist, we devised the phrase 'Whole-Body-Movement' as an appropriate name for a movement system developed for the whole body.

The sequencing of Postures in the system was based on the principle of 'Vinyasa' which involves a sequence of Postures from warming-up, through a Main Posture, to winding down. The 'Vinyasa' system is based on the late Krishnamacharya's organised structured approach, now taught by his son Desikachar, which was first implemented in the Indian Special Needs curriculum in 1985 by Dr Jeyachandran, Director of Special Needs Training.

Working in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland since 1978 with various people and groups involved in Special Needs, I have learned from their questions what to include in the system. The YOU & ME system has been developed through listening, discussing, corresponding, analysing, sharing ideas and offering learning opportunities to one and

all. The various practitioners' suggestions for improving the system has usually resulted in simplifying the knowledge and the techniques.

Colour was introduced in the system to assist with the learning process. This involves reference to the seven spectrum coloured areas of the body and twenty appropriately coloured Postures. Individual sequences of Whole-Body-Movement are organised to suit the needs and abilities of the individual. Each sequence must contain Postures, or Variation techniques, in the various colours of the spectrum to ensure that the whole body is toned with awareness of each part. In addition we use sound to help the students breathe correctly and in unison. Relaxation is also an integral part of the system.

Colour is one of the best mediums through which people can be motivated to learn. The use of colour in the YOU & ME Yoga system also helps the students to understand that yoga is a meaningful experience for the whole of their being:

WARRIOR ~ RED Posture

When performing the standing WARRIOR one knee is bent at a time, and this makes the legs, knees and ankles sturdy and helps students to stand with balance, firmly on the soles of the feet.

The Warming-Up and Winding-Down coloured movements for the WARRIOR are:

WU ~ Blue, Orange, Yellow

| | | | |
|--------|----------|---------|-------------------|
| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd choice |
| Yellow | Triangle | Clamp | Twist |
| Orange | Bridge | Ostrich | Crocodile's Mouth |
| Blue | Table | Chopper | |

Main Posture ~ WARRIOR

WD ~ Green, Indigo, Violet

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|----------------|--------|------------|
| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th choice |
| Violet | Dog | Thunderbolt | Corpse | Lotus |
| Indigo | Locust | Half Butterfly | | |
| Green | Cat | Cobra | | |

Rationale for choice of Coloured Postures for Warming-Up and Winding-Down

Warming-Up for WARRIOR

Yellow - The trunk is held upright throughout the WARRIOR by the yellow back muscles, and this helps to stimulate the abdominal muscles.

The choices of yellow Postures to warm up are:

1st choice - Triangle, standing sideways bend, generally helps to improve balance and strengthens the body. It involves standing like the WARRIOR and it works the back muscles throughout.

2nd choice - Clamp, involves lying bending knees to chest which helps to invigorate the abdominal muscles.

3rd choice - Twist, sitting spinal twist, requires trunk to rotate to sides which helps to strengthen and increase flexibility of waist, hips and spine.

Orange - The orange hips need to warm up so as to allow rotation and abduction necessary for WARRIOR.

The choices of orange Postures to warm up are:

1st choice - Bridge, lying back support, helps to ease stiffness in hips (especially with knees bent) and it increases flexibility in lower back and pelvic girdle appropriately for the WARRIOR.

2nd choice - Ostrich, standing bend, flexes hips and lower back with slightly bent knees; but the WARRIOR requires more stretching of the hips.

3rd choice - Crocodile's Mouth is very similar to the Ostrich only it is performed sitting, keeping hips flexed, unlike the WARRIOR.

Blue - While standing with one red knee bent, both blue arms are stretched out sideways.

The choices of blue Postures to warm up are:

1st choice - Table, sitting arm support, opens both shoulder and hip girdles; it particularly strengthens joints and muscles in the arms and shoulders because of the weight-bearing on them.

2nd choice - Chopper involves standing and then squatting, "chopping" hands on to floor, which increases flexibility and strength in the shoulders.

Winding-Down from WARRIOR

Violet - A violet Posture is required to improve awareness of the whole body.

The choices of violet Postures to wind down are:

1st choice - Dog, resting on hands and feet, turns the body upside down, and in turn stimulates blood flow and exhilarates the whole body. In the Dog attention is focused to the outstretched feet behind - not to the sides, thereby extending body awareness.

- 2nd choice - Thunderbolt, kneeling and bending head to floor helps increase awareness of upper and lower body.
- 3rd choice - Corpse, lying on back facing ceiling, aligning body to floor, in stillness with awareness of relaxation pervading the whole body.
- 4th choice - Lotus, sitting cross-legged, bends the knees, erects the spine and opens the pelvis like the WARRIOR, but the hips are flexed differently. Lotus draws focus to centre of body rather than to the red lower limbs.
- Indigo -** An indigo Posture is required to help coordinate movement of each side of the body.

The choices of indigo Postures to wind down are:

- 1st choice - Locust, lying prone lifting opposite arm and leg, moves the body in a completely different way from the WARRIOR; and it improves mind-body coordination.
- 2nd choice - Half Butterfly - sitting placing hand to opposite leg assists coordination. This is second choice because the body is facing forward as like WARRIOR.

Note: Crane is not advised for winding down from WARRIOR because of the similarity of standing sideways movements.

Green - Throughout the WARRIOR the spine is held vertically upright with the arms outstretched to sides expanding the chest and shoulders. There is no further green movement from this position. Therefore a green Posture is used for winding down in order to move the upper back and chest.

The choices of green Postures to wind down are:

- 1st choice - Cat, kneeling and stretching, works both the chest and back areas; it involves flexion and extension of the upper spine and elevation of the shoulders.
- 2nd choice - Cobra, lying prone backward bend strongly moves the upper back area, but not as much as in the Cat.